

THE FRENCH IN SENEGAL

71

Africans. Indeed only very small scale trading is in the hands of Africans, otherwise large scale commercial enterprises are run by Europeans, and most of their managerial staff being European. Between these large scale organisations, the whole range of middleman trade is dominated by Lebanese and the so-called *petit blancs*. Small shopkeeping is predominantly in the hands of the Mauritians, though larger shops particularly in Dakar, are run by Lebanese and Europeans. At first sight this would seem to be an unhealthy situation, and it would be foolish to ignore the inherent dangers in it. But the most ardent critics of this state of affairs are as often as not visiting Africans, not the Senegalese themselves. When a Nigerian shops in Printania or goes to the local bank in Dakar, he is shocked by the number of Frenchwomen employed in jobs he is accustomed to seeing held by Africans in Lagos. But in considering the rather special case of Dakar one must take into account a number of factors that are often overlooked by would-be critics.

Senegal is a territory of only 3,100,000 people and in the normal run of education in French-speaking African states, even taking into account Senegal's special position among them, the percentage of the population available to fill managerial and sub-managerial posts or indeed any 'European-style' job in all sectors of the economy, can hardly match up to the requirements of the most highly industrialised city in West Africa. In addition Dakar has a large international airport and a port that was the third largest in the French Union. It is also the centre of government for Senegal and the terminus of a railway. It is not surprising therefore that Senegal finds it more difficult to find the appropriate number of Africans to fill its senior posts in commerce and industry than Lagos which has a Nigerian population of over 36 million to draw on. Furthermore Lagos is in the centre of an area where missionaries have been active for over a hundred years and consequently

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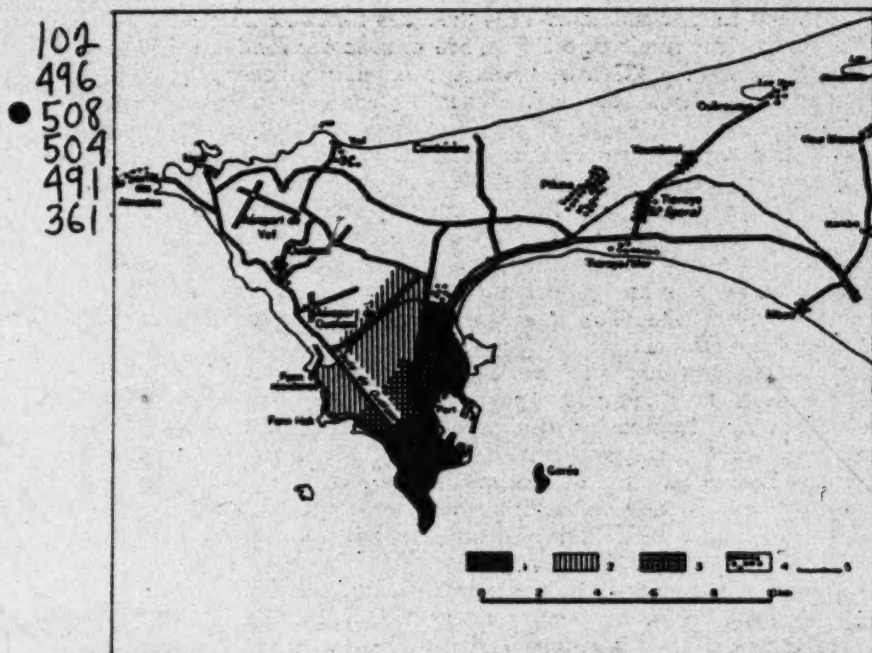


Fig. 2. The quarters of Dakar. --1. Dakar-ville and the industrial zone; 2. Greater Dakar; 3. Médina; 4. villages of the suburbs; 5. railroads.

369 groundnuts at Rufisque, nearer to the centers of production in
505 Cayor. Therefore Rufisque soon became the groundnut capital.
439 As early as 1862, 27 European or Goréan merchants were estab-
[44] lished there (and 12 at Bargny, located three kilometers farther
to the east). Three years later, this figure climbed to 35 (14).

14. Note 1 in Fondation de Dakar,
op. cit., p. 328.

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633 The activity at Rufisque was so great and the launching of Dakar so

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groundnut before exportation has given Dakar an undisputed advantage over Kaolack. In 1957 the exports of groundnut products (shelled groundnuts, oil cake, oil), which represented only about a twentieth of the total traffic of merchandise in the port of Dakar, was more than the total of the import and export traffic of Kaolack (292,000 metric tons as against 220,000 metric tons). In any case neither Kaolack nor Ziguinchor, both located on rivers which are difficult to enter because of the shifting banks of sand or mud, can be dangerous rivals in any way for Dakar, which, because of this, practically thrusts itself on all of Senegal, Mauritania, and the Sudan. On the other hand, Dakar dominates from afar the three other large maritime ports of former French West Africa, Conakry, Abidjan, and Cotonou, whose total traffic in 1957 equaled only about three-fifths of the traffic of Dakar.

369
[433]

But even though the port is the basic instrument of the power of Dakar, there are other additional elements that reinforce this power.

369
509
[487]

First there is the place that Dakar occupies in the sphere of aviation. Since the first direct connection with France via the Mediterranean coast of Spain, Morocco, and Mauritania (16), its role has not ceased to grow on the international plane.

16. Marcel M. Chariter, "Dakar, port aérien," op. cit., p. 84.

[508]

The hydrobase of Bel-Air and the airport of Ouakam, which served the first trans-Atlantic airplanes, are outclassed today by the great airport of Yoff, which was begun in 1940. Well equipped, this airport of international class and one of the largest airports of Africa is by far the most important one in former French West Africa, accounting by itself in 1957 for a fourth of the airplanes (arrivals and departures), a third of the passengers embarking or debarking in former French West Africa, and half of the passengers in transit. For certain directions, such as South America, the passengers from all of West Africa must embark at Dakar.

PORTS

443

30 yards. Immediately east of it is the Place St. Germain, on the south-west side of which stands the main railway station. 361

The western side of the Langue de Barbarie has been reinforced by groynes and a sea-wall.

The town as a whole is well planned, and it has many shops and offices.

Trade

The chief exports are oil-seeds and skins. Imports are mainly manufactured goods. In 1937 the former weighed 30,400 tons and were valued at 31,600,000 francs (£253,990), and the latter weighed 8,300 tons and were valued at 11,900,000 francs (£95,640). 439

Description of Port

Anchorage. Outside the bar at the river mouth there is anchorage in 9-11 fathoms. Inside it there is again a depth of 11 fathoms, which gradually decreases until it is 5 fathoms just below Faidherbe Bridge. 504 [133]

Quays. The principal quays are on the east side of the island. North Quay (Plate 115), above Faidherbe Bridge, is 1,050 feet long, and South Quay, below it, is 1,770 feet long with an alongside depth of 12 fathoms. At the harbour station in Sor there is a jetty 600 feet long with a wharf at its head. There are four small piers on the island, whose positions are shown in Fig. 53.

Equipment. There is a steam crane some 600 yards above the North Quay and a slipway a little higher still. Minor repairs can be effected, but facilities are generally poor.

Fuel. A small stock of coal is kept, but no oil.

Communications

Rail. There are three railway stations (p. 467) in Sor, and the main station is the terminus of the line to Dakar (Route 1). 498

Road. The intercolonial road to Thiès (124 miles) and Dakar (168 miles) starts from the Place St. Germain and then turns south when clear of the goods station. At this point the Imperial road branches off north-east to Rosso (66 miles) and ultimately to Tindouf (2,315 miles). There is a bus service twice a week to and from Matam and Naya. 491 494

Air. The airfield is 3½ miles north-east of Place St. Germain. Its surface is hard clay and it has one hangar. In normal times there is a weekly Air France service to Dakar. 508 509

[ST. LOUIS]

444

SENEGAL AND THE DISTRICT OF DAKAR

206 *Wireless.* The wireless station is to the south of Guet N'Dar. River. Above Faidherbe Bridge the river is closed to all vessels not flying the French flag. Boats drawing 10 feet can ascend to Podor all the year round, and in the rainy season they can reach Kayes (Vol. I, p. 367). Table V shows how greatly river traffic on the Senegal has declined in recent years.

TABLE V. *Tonnage of Goods from Kayes*

	1928	1929	1930	1934	1935
Sent by rail or road	9,545	9,555	11,456	5,269	6,224
Sent by river	2,520	5,815	3,425	313	260

Shipping. There are no sea-going ships calling regularly, but the Messageries Africaines and the Messageries du Sénégal run services up-river.

361 DAKAR (14° 39'; 17° 25' W.). Population, 80,052, including c. 6,000 Europeans. Capital of the Federation and Headquarters of the District of Dakar. Full Commune. Custom-house. Law courts. Chamber of Commerce. Pasteur Institute. Hospitals. Naval base and dockyard. General Headquarters of the army in French West Africa. Police headquarters. British Consulate-General. Belgian, Brazilian, Czechoslovakian, Danish, Eireann, Greek, Italian, Netherlands, Norwegian, Swedish, and Swiss Consulates. Argentine, Finnish, Spanish, and Uruguayan Vice-Consulates. Meteorological station. Airport and seaplane base. Wireless stations. Colleges and schools. Protestant churches. Roman Catholic Vicariate Apostolic of Guinea and Vicariate General. Bank of West Africa. Banque Commerciale Africaine. Crédit Foncier de l'Ouest Africain. Banque Belge de l'Afrique. Power station. Prison. Public library. Hotels. Garages. Railway workshops. Cinemas. Race-course. Sports stadium. Botanical gardens. Agricultural experimental station. Daily market.

361 Dakar (Fig. 54) is approximately 2,600 miles distant from Southampton, from Cape Town, and from Rio de Janeiro. It is, therefore, well placed for taking a share in the trade of the South Atlantic, and it is small wonder that it has become the third port in the French Empire, being surpassed only by Marseilles and Le Havre. It is, moreover, of the first importance strategically.

PORTS

447

Trade

Imports and Exports. Dakar is the outlet for almost the whole of French West Africa north of the forest. In particular it serves the most fertile and prosperous parts of Senegal and French Sudan. The principal export is, of course, ground-nuts, and others are gold, gum, shea butter, kapok, and hides. Imports include manufactured goods of all kinds, coal, oil fuel, wine, sugar, and flour. In 1937 imports totalled 1,298,700 tons to the value of 763,200,000 francs (£6,134,060) and exports 1,284,300 tons to the value of 572,300,000 francs (£4,599,740). This represents some 40 per cent. of the total trade of the Federation.

Manufactures. In or near the town are brickworks, a brewery, candle factories, charcoal furnaces, ice factories, sisal cleaning plants, sack factories, saw-mills, and factories for extracting ground-nut oil. There are also native handicraft workers. West of the town there are two basalt quarries, which are connected to the harbour by a railway line.

There are several trade unions.

Finance. The Port of Dakar has its own budget. In 1938 this balanced at 10,792,486 francs (£66,212). The principal items of revenue were the dues on the loading and discharge of cargo, which brought in 4,150,000 francs, the dues paid by ships, which brought in 1,566,000 francs, and the charges for the use of port equipment, which brought in 1,115,700 francs. The principal items of expenditure were 4,912,166 francs on wages and salaries of employees and 2,551,770 francs on the materials used in the maintenance of the port.

Description of Port

Anchorage. Outside the harbour there is good anchorage in 10 fathoms. Inside depths are greater, and there is space for a large number of vessels.

Quays and Wharfs. The main basins of the harbour are divided off from Gorcee bay and Dakar Roads by the North Jetty. This runs south-eastwards from the shore for nearly 1,300 yards and then turns southwards for its last 550 yards. Here are found the oil berths, and at the end of it is a light. Three moles project from the landward side of the main jetty. Behind No. 5 Mole, the nearest to the land, there is a large open space used for storing dumps of ground-nuts (Vol. I, Plate 84). This end of the harbour is a seaplane base, with a hangar on the shore. On the north-west side there are some

448

SENEGAL AND THE DISTRICT OF DAKAR

504 small piers and a slipway. A quarter of a mile south of the slipway are the naval oil-fuel tanks, which are at the northern end of the dockyard. This has, among other works, a large basin and a dry dock, and behind it are the railway goods station and workshops. [498] Just beyond its southern corner is the main station, but extensions of the line run on to the wharfs. On the south side of the harbour are the three principal commercial basins, separated from each other by moles. The easternmost of these is the South Jetty, at the northern end of which is another light, only 275 yards from the end of North Jetty. [502]

From Dakar point a breakwater runs for 1,000 yards south-east and east.

Alongside depths vary from 21 feet at No. 1 Mole to 34 feet at No. 8 Mole, and the total length of quays and oiling berths, apart from those in the dockyard, is 13,861 feet.

Warehouses. There are warehouses on No. 1 Mole, No. 2 Mole, and No. 3 Mole, and all along the south side of the harbour.

Equipment. The dry dock is 656 feet long and 93 feet wide and can be divided into two parts. There are numerous cranes of all types, including floating cranes. The two largest of these are each of 125 tons. Repair facilities are good, and the port is well supplied with tugs, launches, and lighters.

Fuel. The commercial oil-fuel tanks are on the south shore of Hann bay. Behind them is a goods station. Additional naval oil tanks are farther north-west. A pipe-line connects the commercial tanks to the oil berths at the end of North Jetty. Coal is stored on [439] No. 8 Mole. It is very largely imported from South Wales. Good stocks of both fuels are normally held.

Communications

498 *Rail.* Dakar is the terminus of the railway from Thiès and St. Louis (Route 1). From Thiès Route 2 runs to Kidira (396 miles) and ultimately to Koulikoro (801 miles). The main station is at the south-east corner of the harbour, close to the dockyard.

491 *Road.* It has already been stated that the intercolonial road runs north from the end of Avenue Gambetta. It follows the curve of Hann bay to Rufisque (15 miles) before going to Thiès (44 miles). A minor road leads north-westwards to Ouakam (5 miles) and Yof (8 miles). There are also other minor roads.

● 508 *Air.* The airport lies nearly 5 miles north-west of the main town, 509 and has hangars and workshops. In 1939 Dakar was on the Air France

[KAOLACK]

PORTS

453

(33 miles) and Medina (50 miles), and a third west to Foundiougne (33 miles).

Air. The airfield is 1 mile north-east of the town.

Wireless. The wireless station is in the centre of the town.

Shipping. Boats of the Messageries du Sénégal line call regularly, and the Compagnie de Navigation Paquet maintains a weekly service with Foundiougne, Bathurst, and Dakar.

ZIGUINCHOR (12° 32'; 16° 21' W.). Population, 6,070. Mixed Commune. Headquarters of the Casamance Territory and of the Province of Ziguinchor. Custom-house. Magistrate's Court. Chamber of Commerce. Hospital and maternity home. Police headquarters. Meteorological station. Emergency landing-ground. Wireless station. Roman Catholic mission. Garages. Daily market.

The first large piece of firm ground upstream from the mouth of the Casamance is nearly 42 miles from the sea, and it is here, on the left bank, that Ziguinchor stands. The depth of the river is 6 fathoms. Jetties have been built at right angles to the waterfront, partly to counteract silting, and ships drawing 15 feet can go alongside them. The quays have a total length of over 3,000 feet and the warehouses a total capacity of some 25,000 tons. There are no cranes, all goods being manhandled.

There is a considerable variety of exports, including ground-nuts, fruit, rice, palm oil, palm kernels, cotton, tobacco, sisal, and hides, but imports are chiefly manufactured goods and building materials. In value of trade Ziguinchor comes between Foundiougne and Rufisque.

Communications

Road. The river is crossed by a ferry, and a colonial road leads north to Bignona (16 miles) and then east to Sedhiou (74 miles) and Kolda (136 miles). Another one goes along the south bank of the Casamance, also to Kolda (130 miles). Minor roads lead south to the frontier of Portuguese Guinea and south-west to Oussouye and Diembering.

Air. Seaplanes can alight in the river, and there is a weekly Aéromaritime service to Bathurst and Dakar. The landing-ground is 1½ miles south of the town.

Wireless. The two wireless stations are housed in the same building.

36
[491]
[508]
[206]
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[131]
[162]
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[206]